

**FOLK, ETHNIC, AND PERIOD FLUTES FOR FUN AND PROFIT**  
**A Few Instruments Flutists Should Know**

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**CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON(S): SOME SIMPLE, CHEAP, AND VERSATILE OPTIONS**

- Simple-system flutes
  - Options include bamboo, wood, and “other.”
  - My favorites: flutes made of PVC pipe (!) by Doug Tipple. The closest thing to your silver flute is the low D (\$60-85). <http://sites.google.com/site/dougsflutes/>
  - Good for essentially diatonic playing. May play 2+ octaves; likely to have intonation issues in the upper octaves.
  - Named based on the 6-finger note; thus, a “D” flute is actually a non-transposing instrument, and a “C” will transpose by a whole step.
  - Various simple-system flutes are used in music of the British Isles, India, Eastern Asia, and more.
  - Resources: Grey Larsen’s recordings and his exhaustive pedagogical work, *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle*; Indian bansuri recordings by G. S. Sachdev.
- Recorders
  - My favorites: top-line plastic recorders by Aulos (Haka replica) or Yamaha (300-series), *with* the fake wood grain. Start with a soprano (\$20-30) and/or an alto (\$30-40). Resist the urge to buy a wooden recorder unless you are ready to spend serious money.
  - Capable of fully-chromatic playing, about 2½ octaves.
  - Recorder players don’t consider them to be transposing instruments; they learn separate (but analogous) “C” fingerings and “F” fingerings.
  - Resources: there are many available; I like the recordings of Walter van Hauwe, and his multi-volume method *The Modern Recorder Player*.
- Pennywhistles
  - There are “cheap” whistles (\$3-15) and “expensive” whistles (\$150+). Expensive may or may not be better, depending.
  - Plastic whistles by Susato are a good, reliable compromise between the cheap and the expensive. Start with a high D (\$25+).
  - Named based on 6-finger note.
  - Good for essentially diatonic playing; 2+ octaves.
  - Pennywhistles, also known as tinwhistles or Irish whistles, are best known for their use in Irish music, but are also a primary instrument in kwela, a 1950s popular music style from South Africa.
  - Resources: Grey Larsen’s recordings and book; recordings by Joannie Madden, Mary Bergin, and the Chieftains.

## CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON(S): A LITTLE MORE DARING

- Dizi
  - Associated with the Chinese musical tradition.
  - Simple-system fingering.
  - Named based on 3-finger note. Start with a D.
  - The “dimo” is a mirliton (or membrane), which gives this instrument its charming buzz. Applying the dimo correctly is a bit of an art.
  - Resources: Li Ming’s D.M. dissertation from Florida State is a fine pedagogical reference; my favorite recordings are by Tang Jun Qiao.
- Shakuhachi
  - Associated with the Japanese musical tradition.
  - Endblown; fingering system uses index and ring fingers, and left thumb (five holes total). Basic scale is pentatonic; a complex and difficult set of traditional playing techniques makes fully-chromatic (and even microtonal) playing possible.
  - Start with a 1.8 shaku (lowest note is D).
  - Resources: Masayuki Koga’s *Shakuhachi: Japanese Bamboo Flute* is an excellent introduction to playing the instrument; for good recordings of traditional repertoire, try Yamaguchi Goro or Yokoyama Katsuya.
- Native American (Lakota-style) flute
  - Fipple flute (has a mouthpiece).
  - Most concert-tuned NAFs have a 5- or 6-note minor scale; keys of F# minor and G minor are the most common, but soloists tend to play a large range of sizes.
  - Resources: recordings by R. Carlos Nakai, as well as his definitive book, *The Art of the Native American Flute*.
- And more:
  - Panflutes (Romanian and South American styles), Baroque and other period flutes, fifes (American Revolution, Civil War), ocarina, quena (South American), fujara (Slovakian), kaval (Turkish, Bulgarian), nay (Middle Eastern, Egyptian), xiao (Chinese)...

## AVAILABLE SOON FROM THE NFA MEMBER LENDING LIBRARY

- Bret Pimentel, “Woodwind Doubling on Folk, Ethnic, and Period Instruments in Film and Theater Music: Case Studies and a Practical Manual,” DMA dissertation, University of Georgia, 2009. Available on loan to NFA members: <http://www.nfaonline.org/library>